

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

April 26, 2011

Prescription drugs are critical to the prevention and treatment of medical illness. Often times, a prescribed medication is the most effective method of treating acute and chronic diseases such as infections, hypertension and diabetes. The rising cost of pharmaceuticals, compounded by the current economy, may impact uninsured County residents by preventing them from accessing affordable medications, leading to a potential impact to their health. Providing options for accessing prescription medications at reduced prices may be important to Los Angeles County residents.

Many public and non-profit organizations offer discount drug card programs which are designed to provide an alternative of obtaining prescriptions at a lower cost. Savings vary between different discount programs and cards, and the quantity, type and brand of drug purchased. There are many discount drug cards that are offered free of charge and consumers can typically download a printable card directly from the many websites that offer these cards. San Diego County is in the process of offering a discount drug card program.

Our Department of Health Services (DHS) operates an exemplary drug formulary management program; they obtain discounted federal pricing on drugs, and negotiate
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drug contracts that have helped them realize great savings. These discounted prices are passed along to DHS patients who are able to pay for their medication and are typically at a lower price than offered by discount drug cards. In addition, low-cost or no-cost medical care and prescription medication are provided to DHS patients that are unable to pay the full cost of their care.

The Departments of Public Health and Mental Health also provide access to prescribed medication for their patients through low-cost or no-cost programs.

County residents who do not access healthcare through DHS or its private providers should be informed of assistance programs that can help them obtain prescription medications at the lowest possible price.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board instruct the Director of Health Services, in collaboration with the Directors of Public Health and Mental Health, to identify and report back, within 30 days, potential options for providing County residents with information about and/or access to reduced prescription drug prices; including prescription drug discount programs or cards that may be available.

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